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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 KATHMANDU 002187

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/INS AND DS/IP/NEA
STATE ALSO PLEASE PASS USAID/DCHA/OFDA
STATE ALSO PLEASE PASS PEACE CORPS HQ
USAID FOR ANE/AA GORDON WEST AND JIM BEVER
MANILA FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA
LONDON FOR POL/GURNEY
TREASURY FOR GENERAL COUNSEL/DAUFHAUSER AND DAS JZARATE
TREASURY ALSO FOR OFAC/RNEWCOMB AND TASK FORCE ON TERRORIST
FINANCING
JUSTICE FOR OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL/DLAUFMAN
NSC FOR MILLARD
SECDEF FOR OSD/ISA LILIENFELD

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON NEPAL'S MAOIST INSURGENCY, NOVEMBER 1-7

REFERENCE: KATHMANDU 2022

SUMMARY

¶11. The local press reported that seventeen security personnel and sixty-six Maoists were killed in clashes this week. Maoists reportedly killed seven civilians, including a fifteen-year-old boy, and abducted ten others. In a statement issued on November 4, the Maoists reacted angrily to the USG's announced designation of them for asset-freeze sanctions, declaring the move "ridiculous." Senior Maoists threatened "effective resistance" to Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa's proposed elections. The Royal Nepal Army (RNA) spokesman reported that 702 insurgents and 168 security personnel have been killed since the breakdown of the ceasefire on August 27. Over five hundred teachers have abandoned their jobs due to security concerns and fear of Maoists, causing dozens of schools to be closed throughout Nepal. The rebels have renewed their forced recruitment campaign, demanding one person from each house in the western district of Salyan, and in the eastern districts of Khotang, Ilam, and Udayapur. According to the local press, the insurgents are demanding payments from tenant farmers, taking over forestry projects, and commandeering private vehicles and taxis for their own use. End Summary.

DEATH TOLL FROM CLASHES CONTINUES TO GROW

¶12. According to press reports, seventeen security personnel were killed this week. Two Royal Nepal Army (RNA) soldiers were killed on November 3. In the southwest district of Banke, one soldier was killed by Maoists and another soldier was killed in the northeastern district of Sindhupalchowk while attempting to defuse a bomb planted by rebels. On November 2, ten RNA soldiers were killed after their vehicle drove over a Maoist landmine while traveling between the eastern districts of Bara and Parsa. Six other soldiers suffered injuries. Four RNA soldiers and a police officer were killed on November 1 in separate ambushes by Maoists in the eastern districts of Sindhuli, Bara and Nuwakot.

¶13. Sixty-six Maoists reportedly were killed this week in clashes across Nepal. Five Maoists were killed on November 6 in separate incidents including one in Udayapur District, two in the western district of Arghakhanchi, and two more in Sindhupalchowk. On November 4, six rebels were killed in separate clashes in the eastern regions of Siraha and Ilam. Also on that day, two other insurgents were killed in Nuwakot, north of Kathmandu, and ten in the western districts of Banke and Dang. On November 3 a Maoist was killed in Banke, while nine insurgents were killed on November 2 in the western districts of Kailali and Achham and two in the eastern districts of Sindhuli. Thirty-one rebels were killed on October 31 and November 1. On November 1 eight rebels were killed in separate incidents in the eastern districts of Taplejung, Bara and Nuwakot, while seven others died in clashes in the central and western districts of Makawanpur, Rukum and Nawalparsi. On October 31, twelve Maoists were killed in the western districts of Kailali and Achham, while four died in fighting in the eastern districts of Rautahat, Tehrathum and Sindhuli.

¶14. Maoists reportedly killed seven civilians during the week, including a fifteen-year-old boy. One civilian was shot dead by security forces who mistakenly believed he was a Maoist. On November 6, a fifteen-year-old boy was killed in Salyan District in a Maoist ambush meant for security forces. On that same day, the body of an ex-Gorkha sergeant, abducted by Maoists a week before, was found. Both of the sergeant's hands had been chopped off. On November 3, Maoists hacked to death the father of a former

Village Development Committee (VDC) member in Saptari District in the southeast. On November 2, in the eastern district of Sarlahi, Maoists killed a man in his residence, accusing him of being an informant for police. Also on that day in the east, Maoists attacked and severely injured a Nepali Congress (NC) worker in Saptari District. On November 1, the insurgents killed one civilian in Nuwakot District, while RNA soldiers shot and killed a civilian in the suburbs of Hetauda, mistaking him for a rebel. Two Nepali Congress (NC) activists reportedly were abducted by a gang of over two hundred Maoists, tortured and then killed in Bardia District on October 31.

15. Ten civilians were abducted by Maoists throughout Nepal. On November 4, two members of NC were abducted in Gulmi District, and on November 2 four civilians were abducted in Parbat District. Rebels also abducted four women from Nuwakot District, just north of Kathmandu, on October 31.

MAOISTS' TERRORIST LISTING "RIDICULOUS"

16. On November 4, the Maoist leadership issued a press statement declaring as "ridiculous," the USG's decision to designate their organization as terrorists whose assets were to be frozen. The statement further accused the USG of once again interfering in Nepal's internal affairs, and claimed that the USG seeks instability in Nepal to further its own agenda, which allegedly includes establishing a military base in Nepal in order to target China and India. The Maoist party reiterated its policy of not attacking any foreign power, including America, "at the moment."

MAOISTS AGAINST ELECTIONS

17. On November 6, Maoist ideologue Baburam Bhattarai said the Maoists would resort to "effective resistance" if the Government of Nepal (GON) proceeded with elections. In response to Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa's announcement that preparations were underway to hold elections for almost 300,000 vacant local council seats, Bhattarai alleged that it was merely a way for the old regime to prolong its power. Krishna Bahadur Mahara, also a senior Maoist spokesman, said the elections would only "add fuel to the current burning problems."

RNA CLAIMS MAOIST DEATH TOLL OVER 700

18. In a press conference held on November 6, Royal Nepal Army (RNA) spokesman Colonel Deepak Gurung said that 702 insurgents and 168 security personnel have been killed since the breakdown of the ceasefire on August 27. In addition, 127 security personnel suffered injuries in clashes, and three were abducted. Gurung further opined that the rebels' military strength is weakening, causing the Maoist cadres to resort to guerilla warfare and assassinations.

19. Gurung also denied charges that RNA soldiers killed four students at a Doti school last month (reftel). Gurung said a preliminary report done by the RNA found that the Maoists had used the children as human shields, and that one of the deceased had been stabbed by the rebels, while another died from a bomb explosion. He said the investigation was continuing to determine the cause of death of the other two children.

SCHOOLS CLOSING, TEACHERS FLEEING

10. Students in some parts of Nepal are being denied education due to the Maoist insurgency. Maoists in Doti District shut down schools from November 3-6, and seventy-six schools have been closed indefinitely in Bajura District after rebels demanded "donations" of one month's salary from each of the teachers. Teachers, unable to pay the exorbitant amount, fled fearing repercussions by the insurgents, as well as alleged harassment by security forces who warned them not to provide money to the rebels.

11. Schools in Ramechhap District have been closed for the past two months, affecting almost six hundred students. Staff at the school fled after rumors that Maoists would target teachers. The local paper quoted a teacher as saying that "a cloud of fear dominates the area," despite Maoist assurances they would not target teachers.

12. A statement issued on November 4 by the Nepal National Teachers' Association (NNTA) claimed that most teachers are forced to pay twenty-five percent of their salaries to the Maoists to avoid physical harm, and that many have left their teaching posts to avoid the rebels. On November 4 Education Ministry Spokesman Laba Prasad Tripathi conceded to reporters that some schools had been affected by the teachers' departure, but that it "rests with civil society

to have the schools opened." An estimated 500 teachers have abandoned their jobs.

¶13. On November 3, Maoists bombed a training center for teachers in Bhojpur District, damaging the building and destroying all the computers and office equipment.

YOUTHS IN FEAR OF MAOIST RECRUITMENT

¶14. Maoists reportedly have stepped up recruitment campaigns again, demanding one person from each house in Ilam District, which borders India on the east. To avoid recruitment into the Maoist army, many youths reportedly have fled Nepal. The neighboring districts of Khotang and Udayapur, in the eastern region of Nepal, have also witnessed an upsurge in the number of youths fleeing their villages. According to locals, almost one hundred and fifty people leave the countryside every day.

¶15. Fears of forced recruitment have also caused youths in the western district of Salyan to migrate to India. According to press reports, most of the young people in the district have left.

MAOISTS TARGET LOCAL INDUSTRY

¶16. According to the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB), almost thirty-five percent of its registered cooperatives in the Small Farmers Development Program (SFDP) have been victimized by Maoists. Officials speculate that the Maoists mistakenly believe the government owns the co-ops, and are intent on damaging them, thus hurting the poor "whom they claim to be fighting for." Seventy-six percent of the Nepali population is involved in agriculture, with the majority of those being small farmers. Tenant farmers in the western district of Kailali, who traditionally give half of their crops to landlords, said that Maoists have warned them to stop paying. The insurgents are demanding that they be paid instead, and have threatened to kill anyone who defies their orders.

¶17. Insurgents in the western district of Achham reportedly have taken over forestry projects in that region. According to press reports, the insurgents have disbanded local elected committees and formed their own management. The rebels also have begun collecting revenue from the sale of timber and forest products.

¶18. On November 1, the local press reported that Maoists have been commandeering taxis and other private vehicles. The insurgents reportedly use the cars for short periods late at night. In the far western district of Dadeldhura, the Maoists continue extortion efforts, delivering letters to merchants demanding payments. The insurgents also reportedly collect an average of USD 13 from trekkers in the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), issuing receipts for the "donations."

MALINOWSKI